

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Kindness Report: a snapshot of Compassion in Britain

Action for Happiness have just produced 'The Kindness Report' which provides a snapshot of levels of Compassion across Great Britain in 2019. At a time when the country feels increasingly divided and polarised, it explores this essential human characteristic which is arguably the very foundation of a good society: caring about the wellbeing of others around us.

The report makes for interesting reading here is the link if you would like to read it. https://www.actionforhappiness.org/media/828955/the_kindness_report_december_2019.pdf

It is commonly recognised that there are two sides to human nature. One side is self-interested; our in-built instinct to do whatever we can to survive and thrive. The other side is co-operative and leads us to help others even if there is no direct benefit for ourselves. Both are important, but the balance between them has huge implications for our wellbeing.

Compassion benefits everyone

Unsurprisingly, receiving compassion from others brings benefits for our own health and wellbeing. Perhaps more surprisingly, when we show compassion to others, this also brings benefits for our own health and wellbeing - provided we don't become overwhelmed with the burden of helping. Compassionate behaviour releases the hormone oxytocin which has been linked to benefits for our relationships and heart health. Behaving compassionately has also been found to be associated with reduced overall mortality risk. Compassion has also been found to be contagious and to spread from person to person across social networks. And even in the world of business, research shows that people who help others without expecting anything in return very often achieve outstanding results and are more successful than those who simply pursue their own success. So cultivating compassion benefits individuals, organisations and society as a whole. And a more compassionate society is likely to be one with higher overall levels of wellbeing.

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion" Dalai Lama

Have a relaxing weekend!

Natalie Rosell Hughes

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